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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000590

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BOMBINGS: GOB BLAMES "SUPERPOWER NATION" (UNITED STATES)

REF: A. RANGOON 574

[B](#). RANGOON 573 AND PREVIOUS

[C](#). RANGOON 507 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The GOB, in a bizarre May 15 press conference that attempted to connect an array of alleged anti-Government conspiracy plots, concluded "it is crystal clear" that "a world famous organization" (read: the CIA) trained and supported the perpetrators behind the May 7 triple bombing. This is a peculiar (though not unprecedented) allegation, given that GOB officials recently floated a nebulous request for USG information and investigatory assistance. We advise against a Department statement, which would dignify, and draw attention to, the regime's scurrilous allegations. The SPDC's primary intent, after all, is to defend the regime's very existence, rather than to determine definitive culpability. End Summary.

WE'RE NOT PARANOID AND WHY ARE YOU ALL AGAINST US?

[1](#)2. (U) On Sunday May 15, Minister for Information Brig Gen Kyaw Hsan held a rambling two-hour "press conference" (invited guests only; diplomats and foreign correspondents were excluded) at which he reiterated the GOB's relentless case against "fugitive" ethnic Shan leaders seeking an independent Shan State (ref C) and repackaged accusations that "external terrorists" such as the SSA-S, KNU, KNPP, NCUB, NCGUB, and ABSDF have colluded to destabilize Burma though a series of recent violent attacks, including the May 7 Rangoon triple bombing (refs A, B).

[1](#)3. (U) BG Kyaw Hsan used the press conference--which wove a tangled web connecting virtually all of the regime's diverse "enemies of the state"--primarily as a standard justification of the junta's seizure of power in 1988. "Without the interference or sanctions of big superpowers..." he said, previewing a lecture that blamed foreign countries ("alien masters") for the country's woes, "the Union would have developed to ten times its current state."

THE WORLD FAMOUS CIA

[1](#)4. (U) Kyaw Hsan made thinly veiled references throughout the press conference to the GOB's conclusion that exile activists ("terrorists"), Thailand ("a neighboring country"), and the CIA ("A world famous organization of a big nation") harbored, trained, supported, and/or directed a number of insurgent and activist groups to carry out bombings, several of which were allegedly thwarted by the GOB while others resulted in casualties and damage.

[1](#)5. (C) Kyaw Hsan characterized several dozen groups as "terrorists," but cited in particular the KNU, the ABSDF, and the Washington-based NCGUB as leading efforts to smuggle explosives and "saboteurs" into Burma. He claimed that the CIA ("world famous organization") provided Sein Win of the NCGUB with USD 100,000 under the guise of "refugee assistance" and gave explosives training to unnamed border groups. He added cryptically that "two foreigners and one foreign correspondent" provided similar training to the KNU's 6th Brigade on March 23 and that the SSA-S "appointed four foreigners" to begin an explosives course on May 8 in Thailand.

[1](#)6. (U) With regard to the May 7 triple bombing, BG Kyaw Hsan said "it is crystal clear" that "a world famous organization of a certain big nation" had trained the terrorists and provided them with RDX-based cordite ("Research Department Explosive") and claimed that RDX is not produced in Burma, but only in "big power nations" and is obtained only through "special assistance and armed organizations" (Note: Translated by FBIS as "through the armed forces").

[1](#)7. (U) Kyaw Hsan added that, as of May 14, an additional eight victims of the bombings had succumbed to injuries, bringing the GOB's official death toll to 19 killed, while officially 69 remain hospitalized. The GOB announced on May 13 that it had donated, through the state-run Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, 5,000 kyat (less than six dollars) to each hospitalized victim.
ABSURD BUT NOT UNPRECEDENTED

18. (U) Responding to questions from local reporters, Kyaw Hsan acknowledged the GOB's considerable blame on the KNU for recent bombings, but said that the regime "wishes to restore peace (with Karen insurgents) and the door remains open for peace negotiations." One stringer asked about local fears of further bombings, to which Kyaw Hsan responded "there is no need to pay attention to such rumors; the government has tightened security, so don't worry." And, asked if the May 7 bombings would affect Burma's scheduled rotation to chair ASEAN in 2006, Kyaw Hsan stated, "there is no problem, as there are no such meetings at present."

19. (C) The SPDC's absurd, though not unprecedented, allegations of CIA involvement, are all the more bizarre given that on May 13 officials from the GOB's Special Branch (Police) requested a meeting with Embassy security officers. Police Colonial Win Naing Tun showed a few pictures of the May 7 bombing sites, asked what the USG knew about the attacks, and inquired about what investigative assistance the USG would offer. Emboffs said the USG had no information, observed that the GOB had identified specific groups as responsible, and asked the police official to specify assistance being sought. Colonel Win Naing Tun had nothing more to say.

COMMENT: LEGITIMACY FIRST

10. (C) The GOB's predictable press conference (ref B) clearly demonstrated that the regime is grasping at straws in attempting to "explain" the May 7 bombings. The involvement of radical exiles is not out of the question, but the SPDC's primary intent post-bombings is to defend the regime's very existence, rather than to determine definitive culpability. The disingenuous allegation that the CIA, the United States, and/or Thailand promoted the horrific bombings fits a pattern in which the regime conjures foreign and domestic enemies, real or imagined, to boost its legitimacy.

11. (C) We strongly advise against a Department statement, which would dignify and draw attention to the regime's merit-less and scurrilous allegations. However, press guidance should clearly state a U.S. position that the May 7 bombings were cowardly and senseless acts of violence and that Burma's military regime should undertake a credible and transparent investigation into the events.
Martinez